

Yankees Bid City Buy Stadium And Seek 2d Club as Tenant

By RUSSELL PORTER

The New York Yankees have suggested that the city take over Yankee Stadium and operate it as a municipal project instead of building the proposed new Flushing Meadow Municipal Stadium.

Under this proposal the city could offer to lease Yankee Stadium to New York's proposed Continental League team if schedule conflicts could be avoided. The city could make any deal it wished with anyone who wanted to use the stadium.

The Yankees, of course, would remain as co-tenants.

Park Commissioner Robert Moses announced yesterday that the Flushing Meadow Stadium could not be finished for the Continental League's proposed 1961 opening. He said he had approved the architect's preliminary plans, costing \$170,000. But unless the Mayor and Board of Estimate quickly authorize \$450,000 for final plans, he warned, the stadium cannot be ready for the 1962 baseball season.

A spokesman for the Continental League said that its plans to start in 1961 were unchanged, and that its New York team would play in an existing ballpark if the new stadium were not ready.

William A. Shea, founder of the Continental League, said last July that there was no chance that its New York team would play in the Yankee Stadium because "we want our own stadium." He added that the new team could play at the Polo Grounds or Ebbets Field until a new stadium was ready.

Branch Rickey, president of the Continental League, was scornful of the Yankee Stadium proposal.

"I don't want Yankee Stadium on a permanent basis—in an antiquated park—and what have they to sell?" Mr. Rickey said last night. "It's an international attraction I'm looking for, something that New York and the nation will be proud of—with ample parking space for the fans. This is progress, and the only way to make progress is to make more progress."

The Yankees' suggestion was made in a letter sent to Mayor Wagner on Feb. 1 and made public yesterday. It was from J. Arthur Friedlund, their general counsel. He suggested that the city either buy the stadium from the Yankee Stadium Corporation and the land on which it stands from the Knights of Columbus, adjusting

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the Yankees' leasehold or take over the leasehold.

Mr. Friedlund said the cost of such a program would be less than half the estimated cost of \$15,000,000 of the Flushing Meadow Stadium. Even with improvements that he suggested, he said, the cost would still be considerably less.

These improvements included triple-deck'ing the bleachers to increase the capacity to 100,000; providing new parking space on near-by city-owned property, and installing escalators.

The capacity of the Yankee rectangle.

Stadium is now 67,000. The proposed Flushing Meadow Stadium would seat 55,000, but would have room for 25,000 additional seats that could be installed later.

Mr. Moses said that whoever operated the Flushing Meadow Stadium must guarantee the city \$1,150,000 a year for amortization, interest and repairs to make the stadium self-liquidating.

He also said the stadium must be part of the city's recreational system and provide for football, soccer, cricket, track, bicycle and other sports besides baseball. Present commuter parking on the site at present rates must be continued, he added.

Mr. Moses said the stadium would be U-shaped with seats that could be arranged around a baseball diamond or a football